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Letter dated 10 April 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Despite the urgent calls of the Israeli Government, and members of the international community, the situation along the Blue Line continues to deteriorate.

Yesterday, Hizbullah terrorists continued their cross-border attacks against Israel for the twelfth consecutive day, firing anti-aircraft rockets, Katyusha rockets, and mortar shells at a number of civilian and military targets in northern Israel. Israeli outposts in the Mount Dov and Mount Hermon areas came under fire, anti-aircraft fire was directed at civilians in the northern Israeli town of Shlomi, and a Katyusha rocket landed in the village of Ein Kuniya, causing serious damage. Residents of the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona and the town of Shlomi were forced to spend Monday night in bomb shelters following shelling by Hizbullah.

This morning, the attacks continued with anti-tank missiles, mortars, artillery and light weapons fire being directed at Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) positions in the area of Mount Dov and Mount Hermon, and near civilians in the village of Majdel Shams. Hizbullah terrorists also attempted to breach an Israeli position near Mount Dov, approaching the post under cover of light weapons and missile fire, but were repelled by Israeli troops.

These unprovoked and illegal attacks across our northern border, which pose a serious threat to international peace and security, are a matter of urgent concern to which we have drawn attention in previous letters dated 3 April 2002 (A/56/889-S/2002/348), 2 April 2002 (A/56/898-S/2002/345), 21 March 2002 (A/56/884-S/2002/301), 24 January 2002 (A/56/793-S/2002/115), 17 January 2002 (A/56/778-S/2002/79), 24 October 2001 (A/56/507-S/2001/1012), 5 October 2001 (A/56/443-S/2001/942), 6 July 2001 (A/56/161-S/2001/673), 16 April 2001 (S/2001/367), 16 February 2001 (A/55/792-S/2001/142), 6 February 2001 (A/55/767-S/2001/111), 26 November 2000 (S/2000/1121), 23 October 2000 (S/2000/1011), 19 October 2000 (S/2000/1002) and 7 October 2000 (S/2000/969).

For several weeks now, and indeed since Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000, Israel has appealed to the international community and the

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United Nations to take steps to defuse the dangerous situation along our northern border. The Secretary-General has made repeatedly clear that Hizbullah's attacks are illegal and constitute a threat to peace and security. The Secretary-General further stated that the Government of Lebanon bears full responsibility for cross-border attacks that are launched from its territory. Lebanon has failed to fulfil its obligations under international law and Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000), 1337 (2001), 1365 (2001) and 1391 (2002), which call for the restoration of effective Lebanese authority in the area. The Government of Lebanon is also in violation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and established principles of international law, which clearly calls upon all States to refrain from providing any support, whether active or passive, to all persons or entities involved in terrorist acts, and to ensure that their territory is not used as a base for cross-border attacks.

Nevertheless, Hizbullah, with the continued support of the Governments of Lebanon, Syria and Iran, continues to violate the Blue Line. It should be noted that Hizbullah is attacking Israel from positions situated in close proximity to United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) positions and Lebanese towns and villages. This tactic is a familiar one that Hizbullah has regularly employed in the past and which violates the principles of international humanitarian law and endangers the lives of UNIFIL personnel and other civilians in the area.

In the face of this unprovoked and illegal aggression, Israel is demonstrating the utmost restraint in an attempt to prevent the situation in the area from further spiralling out of control, and is exhausting all political and diplomatic options at its disposal, while reserving its right to self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The international community must be fully aware that the situation along the Blue Line is exceedingly dangerous. In addition to belligerent statements from Hizbullah's leaders — including a recent statement by Hizbullah spiritual leader Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah threatening to fire Katyusha rockets at the Israeli city of Haifa — we have received reports of a massive deployment of Hizbullah fighters in close proximity to the Blue Line. Fadlallah's statement follows a similar statement from Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah threatening to attack Israel "all the way from the [Mediterranean] sea to Mount Hermon". These threats clearly testify to Hizbullah's intention to widen the conflict in the region and ignite a broader confrontation.

Israel again appeals to the international community and the Security Council to act immediately to bring pressure to bear on the Governments that support and encourage Hizbullah — specifically the Governments of Syria, Leganon and Iran, without whose financial, political and logistical support, including the supply of weapons to Hizbullah gunmen, these attacks would not be possible. This is precisely the type of State support for terrorism that Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is intended to prevent and which these Government have clearly signalled their intention to continue in violation of that resolution.

Israel cannot be expected to tolerate daily attacks with heavy weaponry along its northern border that jeopardize the safety and security of its citizens and spreads terror throughout the population. This situation must immediately be brought under control by compelling the Governments complicit in Hizbullah's activities to order a

halt to these illegal and escalatory attacks, disarm Hizbullah, and restore peace and security to the area.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aaron **Jacob**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.